

Parsons Nursery, Wash House
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-F

HABS
WVA,
47-PARSON,
1-F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS
WVA,
47-PARS.V,
1-F-

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PARSONS NURSERY, Wash House

Location: Parsons Nursery Bottom, south side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.614315.4327657

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory
Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture

Last Use: Laboratory facilities/computer center

Significance: The wash house, built in 1939, was the only nursery building constructed by the members of Camp Parsons Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, according to John King. This building provided larger locker room facilities for the 65 acre nursery than had been provided by the original wash house. It also provided a basement room for seed stratification. For overview of Parsons Nursery, see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1939, is derived from a set of blue prints dated March, 1939 (WV-237-F-6 through WV-237-F-12).
2. Architect: Drawings are signed L. T. B. and A. A. G. Neither of these persons worked in Monongahela National Forest at the time.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The wash house was constructed by members of Camp Parsons Civilian Conservation Corps Camp, according to John King interview.
5. Original Plans: Blue prints for the original construction, eleven sheets, are housed at the Monongahela National Forest Office in Elkins. Five of the sheets are lists of materials.
6. Alterations and additions: The east bathroom fixtures have been removed. The west front room has new interior sheathing. Both changes were made in 1987.

B. Historical Context:

According to employee Londa Bennett, in the 1930s Donald A. (Sandy) Oliver, manager of the nursery, employed about thirty women and several men to work with the seedlings and small trees. These employees used the original wash house for cleanup, for lunch and to store personal items. With the expansion of the nursery to 96 acres, about 65 in cultivation, the staff outgrew the old wash house. Like its predecessor, this wash house had a lunch room for men and another for women with wash rooms attached.

The town of Parsons, with a tannery, pulp mill and a woolen mill, had a reputation for supplying work to local folk who could not survive on the subsistence farms of the region, according to interviews with Londa Bennet and Dorsey Knight. The nursery found its employees among the unskilled, local residents. Most were employed seasonally, as the work load expanded and contracted. Dovie Fansler noted that people who worked at the nursery, especially the men, often could not get work elsewhere because they did not have enough education to do other jobs. The nursery was one of two places in Parsons where women could find work. D. A. Oliver employed men for the heavy work of cone collecting, lifting, preparing

soil, moving frames, making seed beds and driving equipment. Oliver hired women for weeding tiny seedlings and bundling and sorting seedlings because he thought they had greater manual dexterity and patience. Oliver did not use members of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Alvin Allison continued Oliver's preference for women weeders and bundlers and men for other tasks.

By the 1960's, Dovie Fansler noted that about 50-75 people worked at the nursery. This large work force required an enlarged locker room facility and relaxation and recreational spaces.

As far as anyone recalls, this building also had the first seed stratification room. In the basement, seeds were cold hardened to increase germination rate. When Alvin Alison came in 1951, he converted the first wash house to a seed stratification building (see HABS No. WV-237-B).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The wash house is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, shingle style. Only this building and the Cheat District Ranger Office have hip roofs. The construction methods of this building are not visible.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. This building houses the laboratory and computer systems for the Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, T-plan, this building is 44' x 22' in the front section, 22' x 20' in the rear wing. The front has two bays, sides have two bays, sides of wing have two bays. There is a partial basement. The attic is inaccessible.
2. Foundation: 8" concrete block. Foundation extends to 6" curb or baseboard around each room.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width cedar cut shingles applied in courses of 5" exposure. There are no corner boards.
4. Structural system: The wood framing is not visible. Surviving drawings say that the walls are "2x4's" on 16" centers, rafters are "2x6's" on 16" centers with a "1x6"

ridge piece. Floor joists in the front section are "2x10's", in the rear are "2x6's", both are on 24" centers. Walls are covered in 1" thick diagonal sheathing boards--a typical West Virginia mountain framing system, covered in a heavy tarred felt.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front and rear doorway have concrete stoops covered in brick veneer. The front stoop is 6' x 4'-1"; the rear is 5' x 3'-3". The hood over the front door is composed of "6x6" brackets with curved angled braces supporting a hood covered in 1" sheathing and asbestos shingles. The hood is painted yellow.
6. Chimneys: 2'-4" square, interior chimney of wire-cut red brick with poured concrete cap.
7. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Front and rear doorways have plain, 4-1/2" board architrave with butt-jointed head. Doorway height is 6'-8". Each has a concrete sill with oak threshold. The pine front door has single pane of glass above one raised and molded panel, then two panels below. The rear, west door is steel with a single light 20" x 35". Doorway trim and doors are painted yellow. Storm sash is missing.
 - b. Windows and shutters: The front section has similar double hung windows, 6/6 with 1-1/2 ogee mutin bars. Each has 4-1/2" jambs and heads, butt-jointed with 1-1/2" sills with a second, inset, sill 1" high. Windows are 29" above the top of the foundation, 4'-6" x 2'-6". Rear wing windows are all similar, with the same construction details as on the main section. These windows are 54" above the foundation, 2'-6" x 2'-6". Window trim and sash is painted yellow. Storm sash is missing. Front section windows once had board-and-batten shutters with iron pintles and "S" shutter keepers (see photograph WV-237-F-3). Original blue prints note that shutters, window trim and doorways were to be painted canary yellow; hardware, black.
8. Roof: The hip roof has asbestos shingles that have replaced the original sawn cedar shingles. It has exposed "1x6" rafter ends with clipped ends and a plain "1x8" fascia. Originally, there were yellow-painted wooden, rectangular gutters (see photograph WV-237-J-3). The overhang is 14", including the fascia. Cornice trim and exposed rafters are painted yellow.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The T-shaped building originally had a lunch room for men on the west, one for women on the east. Each lunch room had a locker room adjoining in the wing. By the 1960's, according to Dovie Fansler, one lunch room had become a recreation room, and the west, men's, locker room had become the women's and vice versa. Today, the east front room is storage and lab equipment, the west front room has lab equipment and a computer center. The east locker room is disassembled and unused. The basement has three unused rooms with 7'-3" ceiling height.
2. Stairways: There are poured concrete stairs to the basement.
3. Flooring: The floor is poured concrete slab with 6" concrete curb or baseboard.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceilings are plaster wall board. In the west, front computer room, the wall board is new, placed over the old board. Ceiling height is 8'.
5. Openings: Doorways and window frames in the west room have been replaced. In other rooms, they are 3-1/2" plain jambs and heads, butt-jointed. The head extends 1-1/4" beyond the jamb. They are shellacked pine. All interior doors are 6'-8" tall with five horizontal panels. Windows have 1" sills with 3-1/2" plain boards below the sill. The small windows in the wing have fixed upper sash and hinged bottom sash, that open in and down.
6. Decorative features and trim: The west locker room has its original configuration (see sketch plan and photograph WV-237-F-4).
7. Hardware: Front and rear door hardware is new. Each interior door has round, hollow, brass-plated knobs without plates but with key escutcheons, two brass-plated hinges with top and bottom ball pins. Each window in the front section has a brass-plated thumb lock. Each window in the rear wing has a brass-plated, spring-loaded box latch and two brass-plated, ball-pinned hinges.
8. Mechanical equipment: Heat originally was provided by a coal-fired furnace in the basement. There now is an electric furnace in each front room. Present lighting is ceiling-mounted florescent fixtures with exposed aluminum conduit. Plumbing in the old locker room is the

original--two set-in porcelain sinks each with two chrome-plated spigots, gooseneck chrome shower heads, and toilets with flush activators that turn.

9. Original furnishings: The original metal-lined shower stalls and 5-panel toilet stalls survive in the west locker room.

- D. Site: The building faces southeast, at 147 30'. It survives in its flat, mown grass site together with most of the original nursery structures. A 2'-10" flagstone walk runs behind the building 5'-3" from the building. There is a white pine tree (*Pinus strobus*) 20' north of the building. A red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) is 38' west of the building. A dogwood stump (*Cornus florida*) is 32' behind and 15' west of the building.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: eleven sheets, dated March, 1939, located at Monongahela National Forest Offices, Elkins, WV.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Alvin Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery supervisor, 1952-57; Londa Bennett, 6-11-1989, Davis, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1930-1939; Arthur (Dick) Fansler, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Forest Service employee, 1945-1986; Oovie Fansler, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Cheat Ranger District secretary, 1957-1964; John King, 8-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-24-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.
- D. McKim, C. R., *Monongahela National Forest History*, draft copy, November, 1970.

Monongahela National Forest, *Proposed Plan, Parsons Nursery*, unpublished manuscript, 1938.

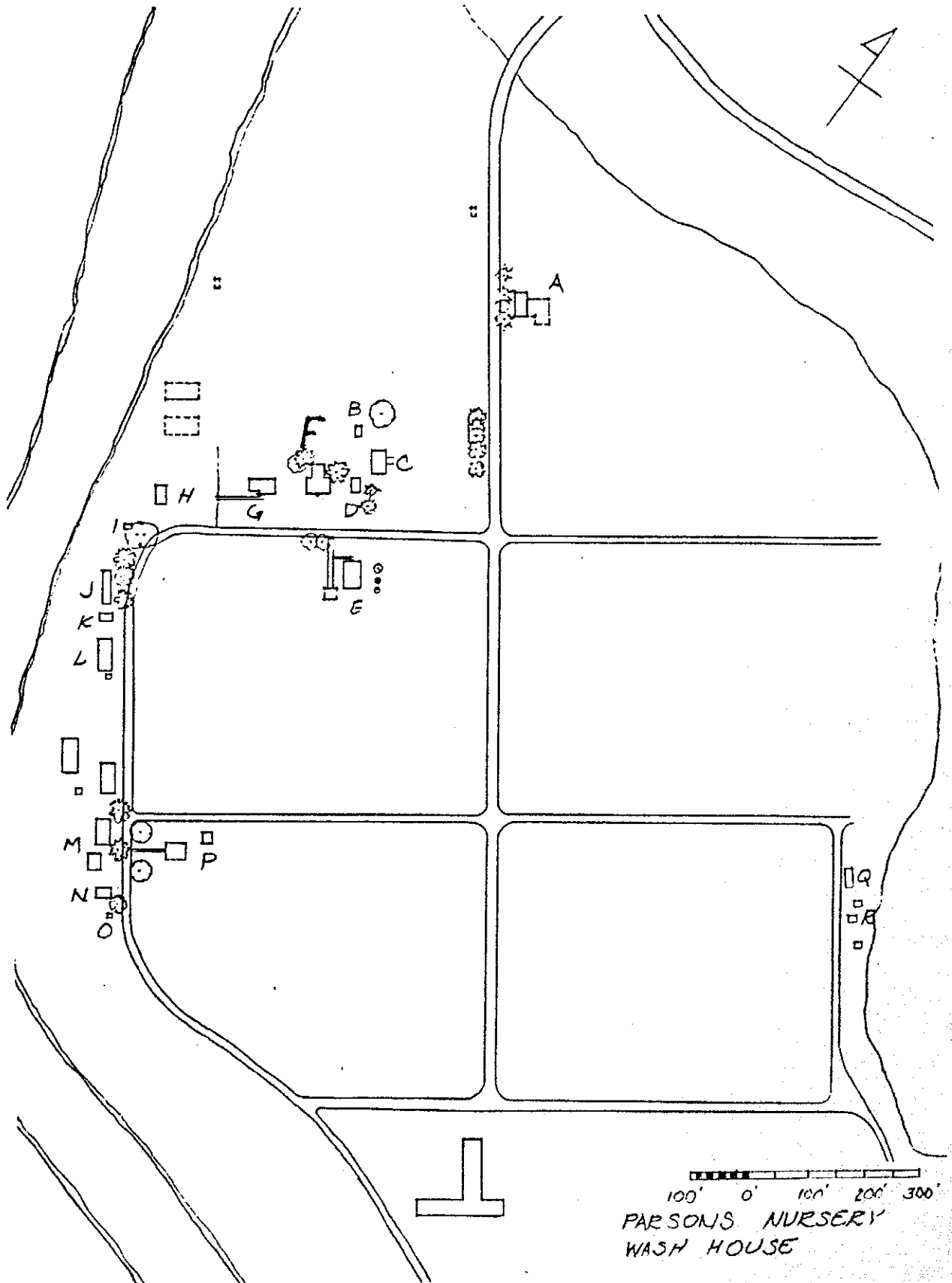
PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

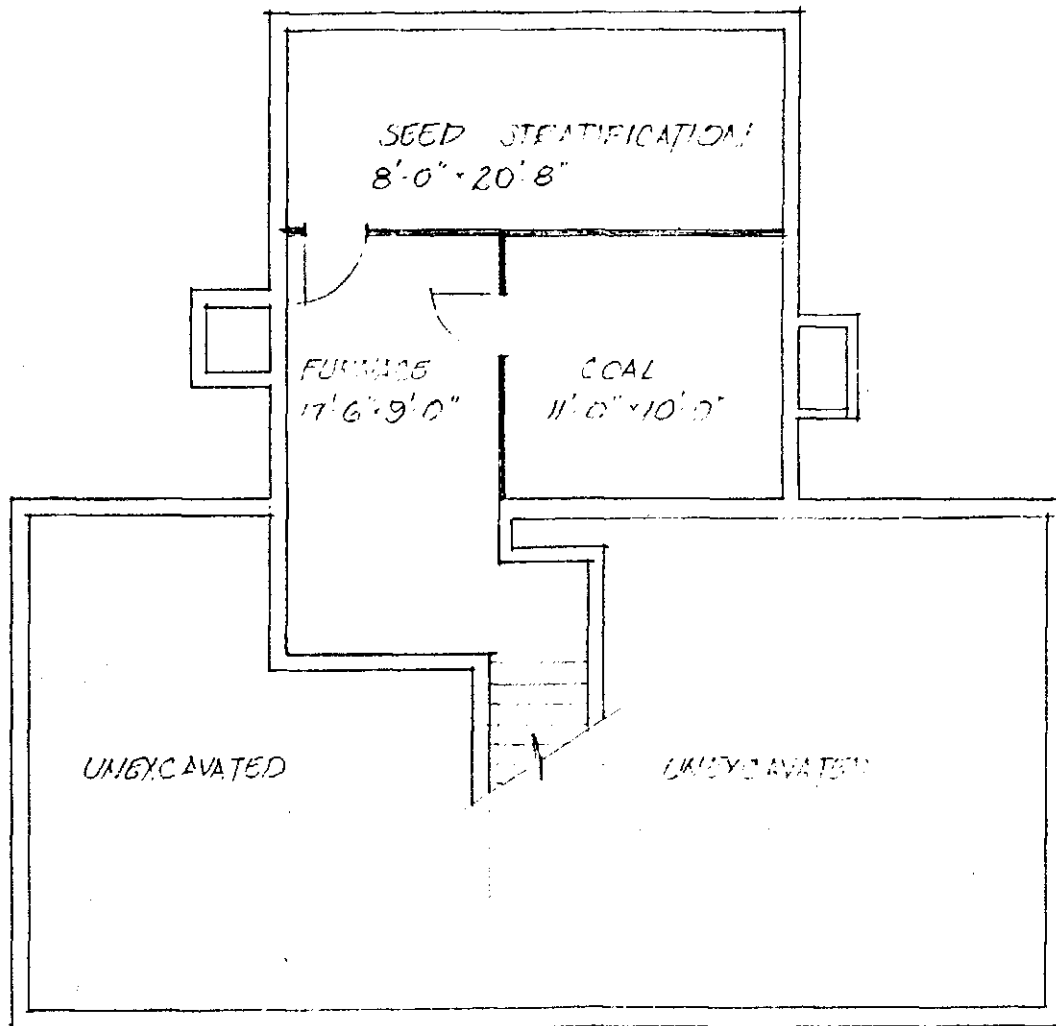
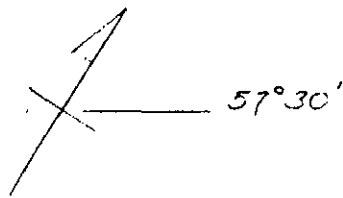
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery Bottom site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

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This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers,
Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio,
under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November,
1989.

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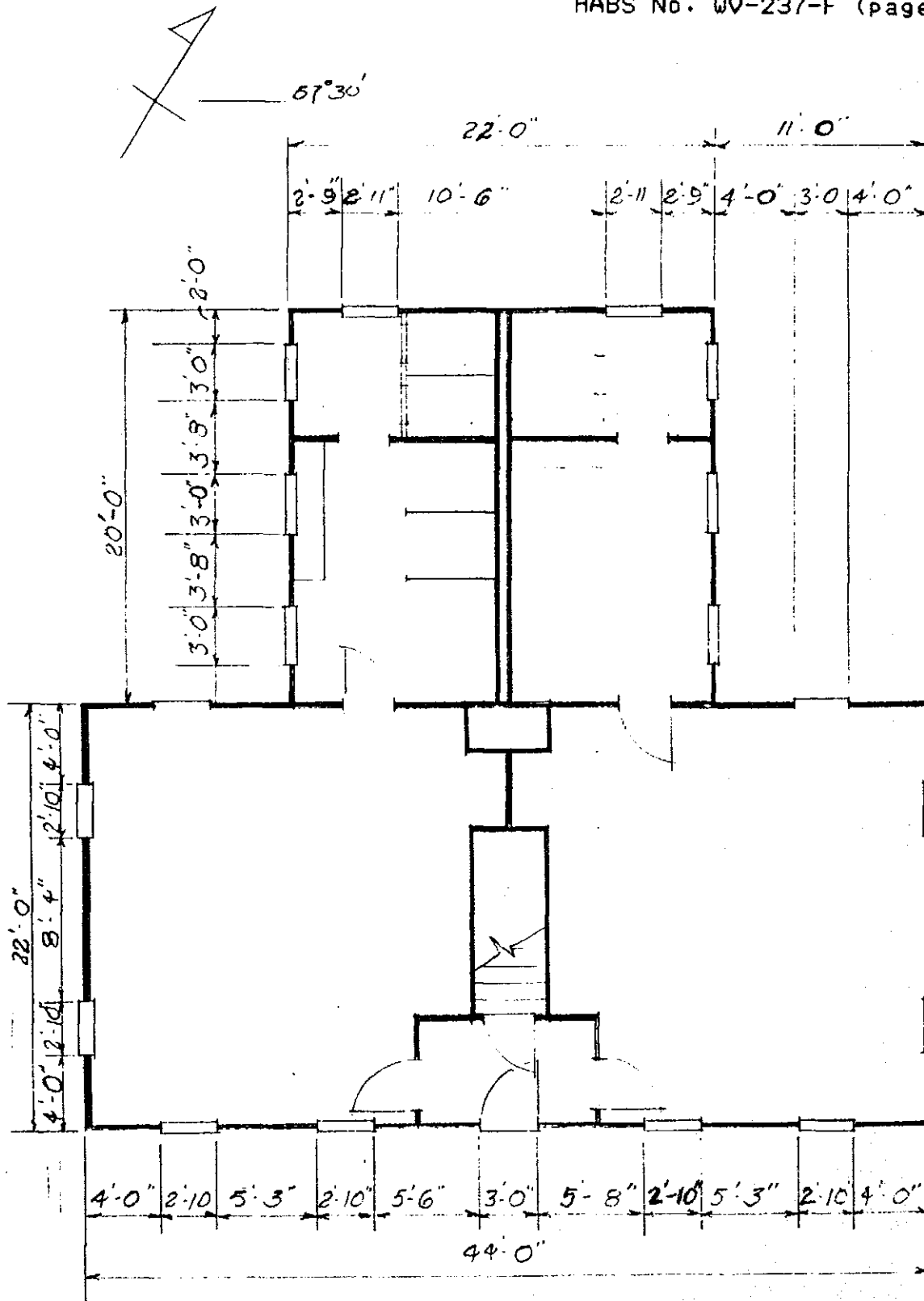




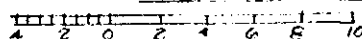
WASH HOUSE - BASEMENT

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WASH HOUSE



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